

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ISLAMA 02369 111158Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 FBO-02 SCS-03 MCT-01 DHA-02 AID-05
CCO-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSC-05 SP-02 OC-06
OPR-02 PA-01 USSS-00 PRS-01 SCA-01 A-01 OMB-01 SS-15
SY-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00
INRE-00 /079 W

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 2369

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION ISLAMABAD INFO LAHORE 11 MAR 77
FROM KARACHI REPEATED YOU FOR INFO:

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L KARACHI 1169

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PK, PINT
SUBJECT: HARTAL

1. SUMMARY: THE MARCH 11 HARTAL CALLED BY THE PNA IS
LARGELY EFFECTIVE AS OF MID-DAY. TAXIS, RICHSHAWS AND
PRIVATE BUSES HAVE BEEN OFF THE ROAD SINCE EARLY MORNING
AND PUBLICLY OPERATED BUSES THAT STARTED RUNNING EARLY
HAVE IN MANY CASES NOW DISAPPEARED. MOST BUT NOT ALL
SHOPS ARE CLOSED. VIOLENCE HAS BEEN LIMITED SO FAR.
POLICE AND MILITARY ARE PATROLLING. AT LEAST 50
PERCENT OF OUR LOCAL STAFF DID NOT REPORT THIS MORNING
BECAUSE OF FEAR OR THE INABILITY TO GET TRANSPORTATION.
WE ARE DISMISSING THE LOCAL STAFF EARLY BECAUSE OF
RUMORED TROUBLE IN THE STREETS FOLLOWING FRIDAY PRAYERS.
THE PORT WORKERS ARE SUPPORTING THE HARTAL SO THERE IS
NO ACTIVITY AT THE PORT. END SUMMARY

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2. PUBLIC TRANSPORT IS NOW VIRTUALLY AT A STANDSTILL.
PRIVATE VEHICLES MOVE FREELY IN MANY AREAS BUT HAVE
BEEN STOPPED BY ROADBLOCKS IN SOME LOCATIONS. ONE OF
OUR VEHICLES WAS SO STOPPED BUT THEN PERMITTED TO
PROCEED AFTER IDENTIFYING ITSELF. WE HAVE SCATTERED REPORTS THAT
VEHICLES HAVE BEEN STONED OR BURNED IN AREAS SUCH AS
LAS BELA, NAZIMABAD AND LIAQUATABAD, BUT THESE ARE

UNCONFIRMED.

3. POLICE ARE REPORTEDLY DISMANTLING ROADBLOCKS WHEN THEY ARE SET UP BUT THE ACTIVISTS THEN RECONSTRUCT THEM ELSEWHERE. THERE IS NO SERIOUS ENFORCEMENT OF SECTION 144 AGAINST PEACEFUL GROUPS, OF WHICH THERE ARE A GOOD MANY SCATTERED AROUND THE CITY. THUS FAR THEY SEEM TO BE ENJOYING THE HOLIDAY RATHER THAN GATHERING FOR TROUBLE. ARMY PATROLS ARE CONSPICUOUS. AN AMERICAN SOURCE REPORTS HAVING SEEN TANKS IN THE CITY, AND ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS WERE SPOTTED YESTERDAY IN LIAQUATABAD.

4. CONSULATE PERSONNEL REPORT THAT THE BRIDGE ON DRIGH ROAD NEAR THE AIRPORT IS NOW OPEN TO TRAFFIC THOUGH IT WAS CLOSED BY THE ARMY FOR SOME TIME. TRASH HAD BEEN THROWN IN THE ROAD AND AT LEAST ONE RAILROAD CAR HAD BEEN SET ON FIRE EARLY THIS MORNING. FIRING WAS HEARD IN THE AREA AND IT IS SAID THAT EIGHT PERSONS WERE KILLED. ONE COMPANY OF TROOPS REMAINS AT THE BRIDGE; AMBULANCES WERE SIGHTED ABOUT NOON, AND COMMUTER TRAINS ARE BACKED UP ON THE RAILWAY LINE.

5. A CONSULATE OFFICER WHO TOURED SENSITIVE PARTS OF THE CITY THIS MORNING REPORTS SIGHTING TWO PASSIVE CONFRONTATIONS BETWEEN ARMY TROOPS AND CIVILIANS. IN ONE CASE THREE ARMY TRUCKS FACED THREE TRUCKLOADS OF CIVILIANS, THE ARMY HAVE RING-MOUNTED MACHINE GUNS TRAINED ON THE CIVILIANS BUT NO

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ACTION TAKING PLACE. IN THE OTHER CASE TWO TRUCKLOADS OF TROOPS SAT OBSERVING ABOUT 75 YOUNG MEN JOKING AND LOITERING NEARBY. AT THIS POINT AND A FEW OTHERS THE STREET WAS LITTERED WITH LARGE STONES AND CHUNKS OF LARGE PIPE TO IMPEDE TRAFFIC.

6. SEVERAL SOURCES HAVE SUGGESTED TO US THAT THE HARTAL IS THE PNA'S WAY OF TESTING THE AMOUNT OF SUPPORT THEY CAN EXPECT IF THEY INITIATE THE LONGER TERM "CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE" AND HARRASSMENT DIRECTED TOWARDS BHUTTO THAT THEY WOULD LIKE TO PURSUE. IF RESPONSE TO THE HARTAL IS GOOD, ESPECIALLY IN THE PUNJAB, SUCH A CAMPAIGN WILL GET UNDERWAY.

7. THE LATEST RUMOR IS THAT A CURFEW WILL BE IMPOSED IN KARACHI TONIGHT BUT WE HAVE NO CONFIRMATION AS YET. MOORE UNQUOTE BYROADE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CIVIL DISORDERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 11-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ISLAMA02369
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770084-0597
Format: TEL
From: ISLAMABAD
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770370/aaaacjhu.tel
Line Count: 114
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 17dcbab9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3141138
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HARTAL
TAGS: PINT, PK
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/17dcbab9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009